

The Prophet's PRAYER

sallallaahu 'alaihi wasallam

described

*from the beginning to the end
as though you see it*

صِفَاتُ
صَلَاةِ النَّبِيِّ
صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
مِنَ الْكَبِيرِ إِلَى الْإِسْلَامِ كَأَنكَ تَرَاهَا

by:

Shaikh Muhammad Naasir-ud-Deen Al-Albaani

Translated by:

Usama ibn Suhaib Hasan

Methodology of this Book

Since the purpose of this book is to convey the guidance of the Prophet (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam) regarding Prayer, it was elementary that I would not limit myself to a particular Madhhab, for the reasons mentioned previously. Therefore, I would give whatever is authentically proved from him (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam), as has always been the way of the scholars of Hadeeth¹³, whether of old or of the recent past¹⁴, as the excellent saying goes:

*The People of Hadeeth are the People of the Messenger, although
They accompany him not, they are with his every movement.*¹⁵

Thus this book would, Allaah Willing, gather whatever is relevant to each topic from the various contents of the books of Hadeeth and the books on the differences between the Madhhabs, such that the correct verdicts found in this book would not be found totally in any one Madhhab. Hence the one acting on it, Allaah Willing, would be among those whom Allaah had guided "by His Grace to the Truth concerning that in which they differed, for Allaah guides whom He will to a path that is straight."¹⁶

When I adopted these principles for myself, i.e. to adhere to the authentic Sunnah, and to implement them in this book as well as others, I knew for sure

¹³ 'Abdul Hayy Al-Lucknowi says in *Imaam al-Kalaam fima yata'allaq bil-Qiraa'ah Khalf al-Imaam* (p. 156), as follows:

"Whoever dives into the oceans of fiqh and the fundamentals of jurisprudence with an open mind, and does not allow himself to be prejudiced, will know with certainty that in most of the principal and subsidiary issues in which the scholars have differed, the madhhab of the scholars of Hadeeth is firmer than other madhhabs. Every time I go into the branches of difference of opinion, I find the view of the muhadditheen nearest to justice - their reward is with Allaah, and He will thank them. How could it be otherwise, when they are the true inheritors of the Prophet (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam), and the sincere agents of his Law; may Allaah include us in their company and make us die loving them."

¹⁴ Subki says in *al-Fataawaa* (1/148):

"The most important affair of the Muslims is the Prayer, which every Muslim must care about and ensure its performance and the establishment of its essentials. Related to Prayer are issues on which there is consensus and there is no escaping the truth, and other issues in which the scholars have differed. The correct approach is either to keep clear of dispute if possible, or to look for what is authentically-proven from the Prophet (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam) and adhere to that. When one does this, his Prayer will be correct and righteous, and included in the words of the Exalted, "So whoever expects to meet his Lord, let him work correct, righteous deeds." (Al-Kahf, 18:110)

I say: The latter approach is superior, nay, obligatory; this is because the former approach, as well as being impossible many issues, does not fulfil his command (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam), "Pray as you have seen me praying", but instead leads to one's prayer being decidedly different to that of the Prophet (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam).

¹⁵ From the poetry of Hasan ibn Muhammad an-Nasawi, as narrated by Haafiz Diyaa' ad-Deen al-Maqdisi in his article on the excellence of the Hadeeth and its People.

¹⁶ Baqarah, 2:213

that this would not satisfy every group of people or sect; in fact, it would result in some, if not most of them, insulting or criticising me. This does not matter to me, for I also know that to please everyone is an unattainable notion, and that "He who pleases the people by angering Allaah, Allaah will entrust him to the people", as the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam) said.¹⁷ The reward is with Allaah for the author of the following lines:

*Nor could I ever escape from abuse,
Even were I in a cave in a rugged mountain;
For who can escape from the people unharmed,
Even if he hides behind the eagle's wings?*

It is enough for me that I believe that this is the most upright way, which Allaah has commanded the believers to take; which our Prophet Muhammad (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam), Chief of the Messengers, has explained. This is the path which was trodden by the Pious Predecessors: the Companions, their Successors and those after them, including the four Imaams to whose Madhhabs the majority of Muslims today attribute themselves. All of them were agreed on the obligation to stick to the Sunnah and to refer to it; to ignore every view contradictory to it, no matter how great the holder or propounder of that view, for the status of the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam) is far greater, and his example is far truer. Because of this, I have acted on their guidance, followed in their footsteps and carried out their commands to stick to the authentic hadeeth, even if this opposes their view. These commands of theirs have influenced me greatly in my perusal of this path, and my rejection of blind *taqleed* (following of opinion). I ask Allaah Exalted to reward them greatly.

SAYINGS OF THE IMAAMS REGARDING FOLLOWING THE SUNNAH AND IGNORING THEIR VIEWS CONTRADICTORY TO IT

It would be beneficial if we gave some of these here, for perhaps this will admonish or remind those who follow the opinion of the Imaams - nay, of those far below the Imaams in rank - blindly¹⁸, sticking to their madhhabs or views as if these had descended from the heavens! But Allaah, Mighty and Sublime, says:

اَتَّبِعُوا مَا اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكُمْ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ اَوْلِيَاءَ قَلِيلًا مِمَّا تَدَّكُرُونَ

¹⁷ Tirmidhi, Qudaa'i, Ibn Bushraan & others.

¹⁸ This is the sort of *taqleed* (blind following) which Imaam Tahaawi was referring to when he said, "Only someone with party-spirit or a fool blindly follows opinion" - quoted by Ibn 'Aabideen in *Rasm al-Mufti* (vol. 1, p. 32 from the Compilation of his Essays).

"Follow (O men!) the revelation given to you from your Lord, and follow not, as friends and protectors, other than Him. Little is it you remember of admonition."¹⁹

1) Abu Haneefah (rahimahullaah)

The first of them is Abu Haneefah Nu'maan ibn Thaabit, whose companions have narrated from him various sayings and diverse warnings, all of them leading to one thing: the obligation to accept the Hadeeth, and to give up following the opinions of the imaams which contradict it:

1. "When a hadeeth is found to be saheeh, then that is my madhhab."²⁰
2. "It is not permitted²¹ for anyone to accept our views if they do not know from where we got them"²²

¹⁹ al-A'raaf, 7:3

²⁰ Ibn 'Aabideen in *al-Haashiyah* (1/63), and in his essay *Rasm al-Mufti* (1/4 from the *Compilation of the Essays of Ibn 'Aabideen*), Shaikh Saalih al-Fulaani in *Eeqaaz al-Himam* (p. 62) & others. Ibn 'Aabideen quoted from *Sharh al-Hidaayah* by Ibn al-Shahnah al-Kabeer, the teacher of Ibn al-Humaam, as follows:

"When a hadeeth contrary to the Madhhab is found to be saheeh, one should act on the hadeeth, and make that his madhhab. Acting on the hadeeth will not invalidate the follower's being a Hanafi, for it is authentically reported that Abu Haneefah said, 'When a hadeeth is found to be saheeh, then that is my madhhab', and this has been related by Imaam Ibn 'Abdul Barr from Abu Haneefah and from other imaams."

This is part of the completeness of the knowledge and piety of the Imaams, for they indicated by saying this that they were not versed in the whole of the Sunnah, and Imaam Shaafi'i has elucidated this thoroughly (see later). It would happen that they would contradict a sunnah because they were unaware of it, so they commanded us to stick to the Sunnah and regard it as part of their Madhhab. May Allaah shower His mercy on them all.

²¹ Ar.: *halaal*

²² Ibn 'Abdul Barr in *Al-Intiqaa' fi Fadaa'il ath-Thalaathah al-A'imma al-Fuqahaa'* (p. 145), Ibn al-Qayyim in *I'laam al-Mooqi'een* (2/309), Ibn 'Aabideen in his *Footnotes on Al-Bahr ar-Raa'iq* (6/293) and in *Rasm al-Mufti* (pp. 29,32) & Sha'raani in *Al-Meezaan* (1/55) with the second narration. The last narration was collected by 'Abbaas ad-Dawri in *At-Taareekh* by Ibn Ma'een (6/77/1) with a saheeh sanad on the authority of Zafar, the student of Imaam Abu Haneefah. Similar narrations exist on the authority of Abu Haneefah's companions Zafar, Abu Yoosuf and 'Aafiyah ibn Yazeed; cf. *Eeqaaz* (p. 52). Ibn al-Qayyim firmly certified its authenticity on the authority of Abu Yoosuf in *I'laam al-Mooqi'een* (2/344). The addition to the second narration is referenced by the editor of *Eeqaaz* (p. 65) to Ibn 'Abdul Barr, Ibn al-Qayyim and others.

If this is what they say of someone who does not know their evidence, what would be their response to one who knows that the evidence contradicts their saying, but still gives verdicts opposed to the evidence?! Therefore, reflect on this saying, for it alone is enough to smash blind following of opinion; that is why one of the *muqallid* shaiikhs, when I criticised his giving a verdict using Abu Haneefah's words without knowing the evidence, refused to believe that it was a saying of Abu Haneefah!

In one narration, "It is prohibited²³ for someone who does not know my evidence to give verdicts²⁴ on the basis of my words."

Another narration adds, "... for we are mortals: we say one thing one day, and take it back the next day."

In another narration, "Woe to you, O Ya'qub²⁵! Do not write down everything you hear from me, for it happens that I hold one opinion today and reject it tomorrow, or hold one opinion tomorrow and reject it the day after tomorrow."²⁶

3. "When I say something contradicting the Book of Allaah the Exalted or what is narrated from the Messenger (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam), then ignore my saying."²⁷

²³ Ar.: *haraam*

²⁴ Ar.: *fatwaa*

²⁵ i.e. Imaam Abu Haneefah's illustrious student, Abu Yoosuf (rahimahullaah).

²⁶ This was because the Imaam would often base his view on *Qiyaas* (Analogy), after which a more potent analogy would occur to him, or a hadeeth of the Prophet (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam) would reach him, so he would accept that and ignore his previous view. Sha'raani's words in *Al-Meezaan* (1/62) are summarised as:

"Our belief, as well as that of every researcher into Imaam Abu Haneefah (radi Allaahu 'anhu), is that, had he lived until the recording of the Sharee'ah, and the journeys of the Preservers of Hadeeth to the various cities and frontiers in order to collect and acquire it, he would have accepted it and ignored all the analogies he had employed. The amount of *qiyaas* in his Madhhab would have been just as little as that in other Madhhabs, but since the evidences of the Sharee'ah had been scattered with the Successors and their successors, and had not been collected in his lifetime, it was necessary that there be a lot of *qiyaas* in his Madhhab compared to that of other imaams. The later scholars then made their journeys to find and collect ahaadeeth from the various cities and towns and wrote them down; hence, some ahaadeeth of the Sharee'ah explained others. This is the reason behind the large amount of *qiyaas* in his Madhhab, whereas there was little of it in other Madhhabs."

Abul-Hasanaat Al-Lucknowi quoted his words in full in *An-Naafi' al-Kabeer* (p. 135), endorsing and expanding on it in his footnotes, so whoever wishes to consult it should do so there.

Since this is the justification for why Abu Haneefah has sometimes unintentionally contradicted the authentic ahaadeeth - and it is a perfectly acceptable reason, for Allaah does not burden a soul with more than it can bear - it is not permissible to insult him for it, as some ignorant people have done. In fact, it is obligatory to respect him, for he is one of the imaams of the Muslims through whom this Deen has been preserved and handed down to us, in all its branches; also, for he is rewarded under any circumstance: whether he is correct or wrong. Nor is it permissible for his devotees to continue sticking to those of his statements which contradict the authentic ahaadeeth, for those statements are effectively not part of his Madhhab, as the above sayings show. Hence, these are two extremes, and the truth lies in between. "Our Lord! Forgive us, and our brethren who came before us into the Faith; and leave not, in our hearts, any rancour against those who have believed. Our Lord! You are indeed Full of Kindness, Most Merciful." (Al-Hashr 59:10)

²⁷ Al-Fulaani in *Eeqaaz al-Himam* (p. 50), tracing it to Imaam Muhammad and then saying, "This does not apply to the mujtahid, for he is not bound to their views anyway, but it applies to the muqallid."

2) Maalik ibn Anas (rahimahullaah)

As for Imaam Maalik ibn Anas, he said:

1. "Truly I am only a mortal: I make mistakes (sometimes) and I am correct (sometimes). Therefore, look into my opinions: all that agrees with the Book and the Sunnah, accept it; and all that does not agree with the Book and the Sunnah, ignore it."²⁸

2. "Everyone after the Prophet (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam) will have his sayings accepted and rejected - not so the Prophet (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam)."²⁹

3. Ibn Wahb said: "I heard Maalik being asked about cleaning between the toes during ablution. He said, 'The people do not have to do that.' I did not approach him until the crowd had lessened, when I said to him, 'We know of a sunnah about that.' He said, 'What is that?' I said, 'Laith ibn Sa'd, Ibn Lahee'ah and 'Amr ibn al-Haarith narrated to us from Yazeed ibn 'Amr al-Ma'aafiri from Abu 'Abdur-Rahman al-Hubuli from Mustawrid ibn Shaddaad al-Qurashi who said, 'I saw the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam) rubbing between his toes with his little finger.' He said, 'This hadeeth is sound; I had not heard of it at

Sha'raani expanded on that in *Al-Meezaan* (1/26):

"If it is said: 'What should I do with the ahaadeeth which my Imaam did not use, and which were found to be authentic after his death?' The answer which is fitting for you is: 'That you act on them, for had your Imaam come across them and found them to be authentic, he would have instructed you to act on them, because all the Imaams were captives in the hand of the Sharee'ah.' He who does so will have gathered all the good with both his hands, but he who says, 'I will not act according to a hadeeth unless my Imaam did so', he will miss a great amount of benefit, as is the case with many followers of the Imaams of the Madhhabs. It would be better for them to act on every hadeeth found to be authentic after the Imaam's time, hence implementing the will of the Imaams; for it is our firm belief about the Imaams that had they lived longer and come to know of those ahaadeeth which were found authentic after their time, they would have definitely accepted and acted according to them, ignoring any analogies they may have previously made, and any views they may have previously held."

²⁸ Ibn 'Abdul Barr in *Jaami' Bayaan al-'Ilm* (2/32), Ibn Hazm, quoting from the former in *Usool al-Ahkaam* (6/149), & similarly *Al-Fulaani* (p. 72)

²⁹ This is well known among the later scholars to be a saying of Maalik. Ibn 'Abdul Haadi declared it saheeh in *Irshaad as-Saalik* (227/1); Ibn 'Abdul Barr in *Jaami' Bayaan al-'Ilm* (2/91) & Ibn Hazm in *Usool al-Ahkaam* (6/145, 179) had narrated it as a saying of Al-Hakam ibn 'Utaibah and Mujaahid; Taqi ad-Deen as-Subki gave it, delighted with its beauty, in *al-Fataawaa* (1/148) as a saying of Ibn 'Abbaas, and then said: "These words were originally those of Ibn 'Abbaas and Mujaahid, from whom Maalik (radi Allaahu 'anhu) took them, and he became famous for them." It seems that Imaam Ahmad then took this saying from them, as Abu Daawood has said in *Masaa'il of Imaam Ahmad* (p. 276): "I heard Ahmad say, 'Everyone is accepted and rejected in his opinions, with the exception of the Prophet (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam)'."

all until now.' Afterwards, I heard him being asked about the same thing, on which he ordered cleaning between the toes."³⁰

3) Shaafi'i (rahimahullaah)

As for Imaam Shaafi'i, the quotations from him are most numerous and beautiful³¹, and his followers were the best in sticking to them:

1. "The sunnahs of the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam) reach, as well as escape from, every one of us. So whenever I voice my opinion, or formulate a principle, where something contrary to my view exists on the authority of the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam), then the correct view is what the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam) has said, and it is my view."³²

2. "The Muslims are unanimously agreed that if a sunnah of the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam) is made clear to someone, it is not permitted³³ for him to leave it for the saying of anyone else."³⁴

3. "If you find in my writings something different to the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam), then speak on the basis of the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam), and leave what I have said."

In one narration: "... then follow it (the Sunnah), and do not look sideways at anyone else's saying."³⁵

4. "When a hadeeth is found to be saheeh, then that is my madhhab."³⁶

³⁰ From the Introduction to *Al-Jarh wat-Ta'deel* of Ibn Abi Haatim, pp. 31-2.

³¹ Ibn Hazm says in *Usool al-Ahkaam* (6/118):

"Indeed, all the fuqahaa' whose opinions are followed were opposed to taqleed, and they forbade their companions from following their opinion blindly. The sternest among them in this regard was Shaafi'i (rahimahullaah), for he repeatedly emphasised, more than anyone else, following the authentic narrations and accepting whatever the proof dictated; he also made himself innocent of being followed totally, and announced this to those around him. May this benefit him in front of Allaah, and may his reward be of the highest, for he was the cause of great good."

³² Related by Haakim with a continuous sanad up to Shaafi'i, as in *Taareekh Dimashq* of Ibn 'Asaakir (15/1/3), *I'laam al-Mooqi'een* (2/363, 364) & *Eeqaaz* (p. 100).

³³ Ar.: *halaal*

³⁴ Ibn al-Qayyim (2/361) & Fulaani (p. 68)

³⁵ Harawi in *Dhamm al-Kalaam* (3/47/1), Khateeb in *Al-Ihtijaaj bi ash-Shaafi'i* (8/2), Ibn 'Asaakir (15/9/10), Nawawi in *Al-Majmoo'* (1/63), Ibn al-Qayyim (2/361) & Fulaani (p. 100); the second narration is from *Hilyah al-Awliyyaa'* of Abu Nu'aim.

³⁶ Nawawi in *Al-Majmoo'* (1/63), Sha'raani (1/57), giving its sources as Haakim and Baihaqi, & Fulaani (p. 107). Sha'raani said, "Ibn Hazm said, 'That is, ... found to be saheeh by him or by any other Imaam.'" His saying given next confirms this understanding.